1-11. (Cancelled)

12. (Previously Amended) The retractor of claim 21, comprising a second blade, the first blade and the second blade being movable relative to each other, the first blade having a first surface and the second blade having a second surface, the first surface and the second surface facing away from each other and being adapted to engage tissue for retraction.

13. (Previously Added) The retractor of claim 12, comprising an actuator for moving the first blade and the second blade relative to one another.

14. (Previously Amended) The retractor of claim 12, comprising a crossbeam, and wherein the first blade and the second blade are attached to the crossbeam.

15. (Previously Added) The retractor of claim 12, comprising a first arm and a second arm, the first blade being carried on the first arm and the second blade being carried on the second arm.

16. (Previously Amended) The retractor of claim 12, comprising a crossbeam, and wherein the first arm and the second arm are attached to the crossbeam, at least one of the first arm and the second arm being movable relative to the crossbeam.

17-18. (Cancelled)

19. (Currently Amended) The retractor of claim 21~~8~~, comprising a first arm having the first blade carried thereon and a second arm having a second blade carried thereon, and wherein the first blade and the second blade are movable relative to each other, the first blade having a first surface and the second blade having a second surface, the first surface and the second surface facing away from each other and being adapted to engage tissue for retraction.

20. (Previously Amended) The retractor of claim 21, wherein the suture stay has a plurality of slots.

21. (Currently Amended) A retractor, comprising at least one arm having a cavity, a first blade attached to the at least one arm for retracting tissue, and a suture stay removably disposed ~~at least partially~~ within the cavity, the suture stay having at least one slot.

22. (Previously Amended) The retractor of claim 20, wherein the at least one arm has a plurality of channels aligned with the plurality of slots when the suture stay is retained within the opening.

23. (Previously Amended) The retractor of claim 21, wherein the suture stay has a body having a first surface, a second surface and a slot configured to removably receive a suture therein.

24. (Previously Amended) The retractor of claim 23, wherein the slot extends from the first surface to the second surface.

25. (Previously Added) The retractor of claim 23, wherein the body has a top surface, and the slot extends from the top surface into the body and from the first surface to the second surface.

26. (Previously Amended) The retractor of claim 22, wherein the suture stay has a body having a first surface and a second surface, and at least one of the plurality of slots extends from the first surface to the second surface.

27. (Previously Added) The retractor of claim 26, wherein the body has a top surface and a bottom surface, and the slot extends from the top surface into the body.

28. (Previously Added) The retractor of claim 27, comprising a clamp, the clamp coupled to the body adjacent to the slot.

29. (Previously Added) The retractor of claim 28, wherein the clamp is configured to engage and retain a suture thread within the slot.

30. (Previously Added) The retractor of claim 28, wherein the clamp is configured to permit a suture to pass be drawn through the slot in a first direction, but prevent the suture from being drawn through the slot in a direction substantially opposite the first direction.

31. (Previously Added) The retractor of claim 27, wherein the body has an aperture extending from the bottom surface into the body.

32. (Previously Added) The retractor of claim 31, wherein the aperture is generally disposed transverse to the slot.

33. (Previously Added) The retractor of claim 32, wherein the body has a bore that extends from the bottom surface into the body and communicates with the aperture.

34. (Previously Added) The retractor of claim 33, wherein the aperture communicates with the slot.

35. (Previously Added) The retractor of claim 34, comprising a clamp, the clamp coupled to the body adjacent to the slot.

36. (Previously Added) The retractor of claim 35, wherein the clamp is configured to engage and retain a suture thread within the slot.

37. (Previously Added) The retractor of claim 36, wherein the clamp is configured to permit a suture to pass be drawn through the slot in a first direction, but prevent the suture from being drawn through the slot in a direction substantially opposite the first direction.

38. (Previously Added) The retractor of claim 37, wherein the clamp is configured to be at least partially disposed within the aperture and the slot.

39. (Previously Added) The retractor of claim 38, wherein the clamp comprises a post and a leaf extending from the post.

40. (Previously Added) The retractor of claim 39, wherein the post is configured to be at least partially retained within the bore and the leaf is configured to be at least partially retained within the aperture.

41. (Previously Added) The retractor of claim 40, wherein the leaf is deflected to permit the leaf to be at least partially contained within the aperture.

42. (Previously Added) The retractor of claim 41, wherein the body comprises at least one inner wall formed by the slot and wherein the leaf has an outer edge that engages the at least one inner wall when the leaf is at least partially contained within the aperture.

43. (Previously Added) The retractor of claim 41, wherein the body comprises at least one inner wall formed by the slot and wherein the leaf has an outer edge that engages the at least one inner wall when the leaf is at least partially contained within the aperture.

44-45. (Cancelled)

46. (Previously Added) The retractor of claim 21, wherein the arm has a surface from which the cavity extends, and the suture stay has a surface that is substantially aligned with the surface of the arm when the suture stay is disposed within the cavity.

47. (New) A retractor, comprising at least one arm having a cavity, a first blade attached to the at least one arm for retracting tissue, and a suture stay removably disposed at least partially within the cavity, the suture stay having at least one slot, wherein at least a portion of the at least one slot is disposed within the cavity.

48. (New) The retractor of claim 47, comprising a second blade, the first blade and the second blade being movable relative to each other, the first blade having a first surface and the second blade having a second surface, the first surface and the second surface facing away from each other and being adapted to engage tissue for retraction.

49. (New) The retractor of claim 48, comprising an actuator for moving the first blade and the second blade relative to one another.

50. (New) The retractor of claim 48, comprising a crossbeam, and wherein the first blade and the second blade are attached to the crossbeam.

51. (New) The retractor of claim 48, comprising a first arm and a second arm, the first blade being carried on the first arm and the second blade being carried on the second arm.

52. (New) The retractor of claim 48, comprising a crossbeam, and wherein the first arm and the second arm are attached to the crossbeam, at least one of the first arm and the second arm being movable relative to the crossbeam.

53. (New) The retractor of claim 47, comprising a first arm having the first blade carried thereon and a second arm having a second blade carried thereon, and wherein the first blade and the second blade are movable relative to each other, the first blade having a first surface and the second blade having a second surface, the first surface and the second surface facing away from each other and being adapted to engage tissue for retraction.

54. (New) The retractor of claim 47, wherein the suture stay has a plurality of slots.

55. (New) The retractor of claim 54, wherein the at least one arm has a plurality of channels aligned with the plurality of slots when the suture stay is retained within the opening.

56. (New) The retractor of claim 47, wherein the suture stay has a body having a first surface, a second surface and a slot configured to removably receive a suture therein.

57. (New) The retractor of claim 56, wherein the slot extends from the first surface to the second surface.

58. (New) The retractor of claim 56, wherein the body has a top surface, and the slot extends from the top surface into the body and from the first surface to the second surface.

59. (New) The retractor of claim 55, wherein the suture stay has a body having a first surface and a second surface, and at least one of the plurality of slots extends from the first surface to the second surface.

60. (New) The retractor of claim 59, wherein the body has a top surface and a bottom surface, and the slot extends from the top surface into the body.

61. (New) The retractor of claim 60, comprising a clamp, the clamp coupled to the body adjacent to the slot.

62. (New) The retractor of claim 61, wherein the clamp is configured to engage and retain a suture thread within the slot.

63. (New) The retractor of claim 61, wherein the clamp is configured to permit a suture to pass be drawn through the slot in a first direction, but prevent the suture from being drawn through the slot in a direction substantially opposite the first direction.

64. (New) The retractor of claim 60, wherein the body has an aperture extending from the bottom surface into the body.

65. (New) The retractor of claim 64, wherein the aperture is generally disposed transverse to the slot.

66. (New) The retractor of claim 65, wherein the body has a bore that extends from the bottom surface into the body and communicates with the aperture.

67. (New) The retractor of claim 66, wherein the aperture communicates with the slot.

68. (New) The retractor of claim 67, comprising a clamp, the clamp coupled to the body adjacent to the slot.

69. (New) The retractor of claim 68, wherein the clamp is configured to engage and retain a suture thread within the slot.

70. (New) The retractor of claim 69, wherein the clamp is configured to permit a suture to pass be drawn through the slot in a first direction, but prevent the suture from being drawn through the slot in a direction substantially opposite the first direction.

71. (New) The retractor of claim 70, wherein the clamp is configured to be at least partially disposed within the aperture and the slot.

72. (New) The retractor of claim 71, wherein the clamp comprises a post and a leaf extending from the post.

73. (New) The retractor of claim 72, wherein the post is configured to be at least partially retained within the bore and the leaf is configured to be at least partially retained within the aperture.

74. (New) The retractor of claim 73, wherein the leaf is deflected to permit the leaf to be at least partially contained within the aperture.

75. (New) The retractor of claim 74, wherein the body comprises at least one inner wall formed by the slot and wherein the leaf has an outer edge that engages the at least one inner wall when the leaf is at least partially contained within the aperture.

76. (New) The retractor of claim 74, wherein the body comprises at least one inner wall formed by the slot and wherein the leaf has an outer edge that engages the at least one inner wall when the leaf is at least partially contained within the aperture.

77. (New) The retractor of claim 47, wherein the suture stay is substantially disposed within the cavity.

78. (New) The retractor of claim 47, wherein the arm has a surface from which the cavity extends, and the suture stay has a surface that is substantially aligned with the surface of the arm when the suture stay is disposed within the cavity.

79. (New) A retractor, comprising at least one arm having a cavity, a first blade attached to the at least one arm for retracting tissue, and a suture stay removably disposed at least partially within the cavity, the suture stay having a plurality of slots, wherein the at least one arm has a plurality of channels aligned with the plurality of slots when the suture stay is retained within the opening.

80. (New) The retractor of claim 79, comprising a second blade, the first blade and the second blade being movable relative to each other, the first blade having a first surface and the second blade having a second surface, the first surface and the second surface facing away from each other and being adapted to engage tissue for retraction.

81. (New) The retractor of claim 80, comprising an actuator for moving the first blade and the second blade relative to one another.

82. (New) The retractor of claim 80, comprising a crossbeam, and wherein the first blade and the second blade are attached to the crossbeam.

83. (New) The retractor of claim 80, comprising a first arm and a second arm, the first blade being carried on the first arm and the second blade being carried on the second arm.

84. (New) The retractor of claim 80, comprising a crossbeam, and wherein the first arm and the second arm are attached to the crossbeam, at least one of the first arm and the second arm being movable relative to the crossbeam.

85. (New) The retractor of claim 79, comprising a first arm having the first blade carried thereon and a second arm having a second blade carried thereon, and wherein the first blade and the second blade are movable relative to each other, the first blade having a first surface and the second blade having a second surface, the first surface and the second surface facing away from each other and being adapted to engage tissue for retraction.

86. (New) The retractor of claim 79, wherein the suture stay has a body having a first surface, a second surface and a slot configured to removably receive a suture therein.

87. (New) The retractor of claim 86, wherein the slot extends from the first surface to the second surface.

88. (New) The retractor of claim 86, wherein the body has a top surface, and the slot extends from the top surface into the body and from the first surface to the second surface.

89. (New) The retractor of claim 79, wherein the suture stay has a body having a first surface and a second surface, and at least one of the plurality of slots extends from the first surface to the second surface.

90. (New) The retractor of claim 89, wherein the body has a top surface and a bottom surface, and the slot extends from the top surface into the body.

91. (New) The retractor of claim 90, comprising a clamp, the clamp coupled to the body adjacent to the slot.

92. (New) The retractor of claim 91, wherein the clamp is configured to engage and retain a suture thread within the slot.

93. (New) The retractor of claim 91, wherein the clamp is configured to permit a suture to pass be drawn through the slot in a first direction, but prevent the suture from being drawn through the slot in a direction substantially opposite the first direction.

94. (New) The retractor of claim 90, wherein the body has an aperture extending from the bottom surface into the body.

95. (New) The retractor of claim 94, wherein the aperture is generally disposed transverse to the slot.

96. (New) The retractor of claim 95, wherein the body has a bore that extends from the bottom surface into the body and communicates with the aperture.

97. (New) The retractor of claim 96, wherein the aperture communicates with the slot.

98. (New) The retractor of claim 97, comprising a clamp, the clamp coupled to the body adjacent to the slot.

99. (New) The retractor of claim 98, wherein the clamp is configured to engage and retain a suture thread within the slot.

100. (New) The retractor of claim 99, wherein the clamp is configured to permit a suture to pass be drawn through the slot in a first direction, but prevent the suture from being drawn through the slot in a direction substantially opposite the first direction.

101. (New) The retractor of claim 100, wherein the clamp is configured to be at least partially disposed within the aperture and the slot.

102. (New) The retractor of claim 101, wherein the clamp comprises a post and a leaf extending from the post.

103. (New) The retractor of claim 102, wherein the post is configured to be at least partially retained within the bore and the leaf is configured to be at least partially retained within the aperture.

104. (New) The retractor of claim 103, wherein the leaf is deflected to permit the leaf to be at least partially contained within the aperture.

105. (New) The retractor of claim 104, wherein the body comprises at least one inner wall formed by the slot and wherein the leaf has an outer edge that engages the at least one inner wall when the leaf is at least partially contained within the aperture.

106. (New) The retractor of claim 104, wherein the body comprises at least one inner wall formed by the slot and wherein the leaf has an outer edge that engages the at least one inner wall when the leaf is at least partially contained within the aperture.

107. (New) The retractor of claim 79, wherein the suture stay is substantially disposed within the cavity.

108. (New) A retractor, comprising at least one arm having a cavity and a surface from which the cavity extends, a first blade attached to the at least one arm for retracting tissue, and a suture stay removably disposed at least partially within the cavity, the suture stay having a plurality of slots and a surface that is substantially aligned with the surface of the arm when the suture stay is disposed within the cavity.